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ABSTRACT

This guide presents criteria for local evaluation of cooperative education programs. The first section of the guide defines cooperative education and sketches the elements that determine a cooperative education program. The second part of the evaluation guide contains components to be evaluated in cooperative education programs. Each component is defined by a goal and described by the quality indicators that should be found in the program. The eight components to be evaluated are the following: program development and operation; advisory council; facilities and equipment; program administration; instructional staff; curriculum and instruction; student follow-up and placement; and cooperative education components. The final section of the guide is a summary sheet to be filled out as part of the evaluation process. Space is left for comments on strengths, recommendations, and plans for improvements for the eight components reviewed. (KC)

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EVALUATION OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATION

Cooperative Vocational Education contributes to human resource development in many ways. The following are a few key points:

- Cooperative education provides each individual participant with an experiential learning experience to achieve success.
- Cooperative education is an effective learning strategy at either the secondary or postsecondary level.
- Cooperative education is open to all individuals, whether they are disadvantaged, handicapped, potential dropouts, or gifted and talented.
- Cooperative education establishes a business, industry, education partnership and contributes to economic development.

The purpose of evaluation should not be to determine whether cooperative education is a desirable or effective educational activity, but how to make it more useful for students, employers, and the community.

What is Cooperative Education?

The term "cooperative education" means a method of instruction of Vocational Education for persons who, through written cooperative arrangements between the school and employers, receive instruction, including required academic courses and related vocational instruction, by alternation of study in school with a job in any occupational field, but these two experiences must be planned and supervised by the school and employers so that each contributes to the student's education and to his or her employability. Work periods and school attendance may be on alternate half days, full days, weeks, or other periods of time in fulfilling the cooperative program. Public Law 98-524, Section 521(8).

What Elements Determine a Cooperative Education Program?

1. Alternate or parallel periods of instruction in school and supervised public or private employment are required. Periods of work and classroom activities may be made up of alternate half days, full days, weeks, or other time segments. The average minimum number of hours is usually between 15 and 20 hours per week. This facilitates compliance with federal and state laws affecting the employment of minors.
2. A written agreement among the schools, the employers, the students, and, where appropriate, the parents or guardians is required. This written agreement, commonly known as the training agreement, is school initiated and outlines the responsibilities of the educational agencies, employers, and students to the program.

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3. Instruction (including required academic instruction) must be related to the job and to the students' academic study or career goals. Vocational cooperative education programs normally have time requirements for related vocational instruction by occupational area, as dictated by the state guidelines. This required related instruction can range from a minimum of one hour up to three hours per day. At the secondary level, in-school courses are specifically designed to develop and improve students' attitudes, knowledge, and employability skills, and are generally designed to be taken concurrently with employment.
4. The alternation of study and work must be planned and supervised to further the students' education and employability. Cooperative education coordinators are responsible for planning and conducting related academic and vocational instruction designed to meet the students' on-the-job needs. The training sponsors have the responsibility of providing a variety of well-planned tasks to assist students in becoming competent employees. Competent supervision by both parties ensures that experience in a systematic progression of job-related skills is correlated with classroom instruction.
5. Students must be employed and compensated in compliance with federal, state, and local laws. Such compliance ensures that students are not exploited for private gain.

In keeping with the aforementioned elements, cooperative education should be reviewed in a comprehensive manner. Undoubtedly, the key component of any successful cooperative education program is the teacher-coordinator. However, the following areas should be reviewed with equal importance to insure a solid foundation for continuance.

I. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION

Goal: The Cooperative Education program is planned to meet student and community needs through clear, attainable objectives which fit the overall education program of the school and are evaluated systematically.

Quality Indicators:

1. Written statements containing the purposes, goals, and objectives of the Cooperative Education program are on file with the administration and are consistent with the school philosophy.
2. All students enrolled in the program have an occupational goal or objective on file.
3. Provisions are made to accommodate students in the Cooperative Education program classified as disadvantaged, handicapped, or other special audiences.
4. A clear-cut job description for the teacher-coordinator is maintained and updated annually.
5. The teacher-coordinator works with school guidance personnel in assessment and enrollment of prospective Cooperative Education students.
6. Program planning reflects requirements for emphasis on math, English, science, social science, and vocational education as core curriculum subjects.

II. ADVISORY COUNCIL

Goal: The Advisory Council provides effective communication between the school and the community, is responsible for suggesting curriculum changes, and assists in program evaluation.

Quality Indicators:

1. There is a proportionate representation from Cooperative Education on the school's Advisory Council.
2. The teacher-coordinator attends the meetings of the Advisory Council and is familiar with recommendations made.

III. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

Goal: The facilities are current and of sufficient size and quality to effectively meet the instructional needs of students in Cooperative Education.

Quality Indicators:

1. A classroom, storage facilities, and access to a private office with telephone and typewriter are available to the teacher-coordinator of the Cooperative Education program.

IV. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Goal: The Cooperative Education program functions with an adequate budget for salary, travel, equipment, and supplies.

Quality Indicators:

1. The Cooperative Education program is an integral part of the local plan for Vocational Education and considered an equal, but separate program.
2. An approved budget for the current fiscal year is on file and available to the teacher-coordinator for operational purposes of the Cooperative Education program.
3. The teacher-coordinator uses a plan or checklist to assure each student is kept informed as to achievement of necessary skills and knowledges (competencies).
4. An ongoing review of instructional materials to ensure freedom from sex discrimination and sex bias is being conducted.

V. INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

Goal: A qualified teacher-coordinator is responsible for conducting a quality Cooperative Education program, as well as maintaining effective school and community relations.

Quality Indicators:

1. The teacher-coordinator is vocationally approved and possesses the personal, technical, professional, and occupational competencies necessary to prepare students for entry level employment or for advanced educational program.
2. The teacher-coordinator participates in continuing in-service professional and technical development programs designed for their benefit.
3. Professional competency is maintained through involvement in organizations such as:
 - a. American Vocational Association (AVA)
 - b. Cooperative Work Experience Education Association (CWEEA)

VI. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Goal: The content of all instruction is organized around the skill development needed by students and includes an overview of occupational opportunities.

Quality Indicators:

1. The Cooperative Education curriculum is based on analysis of the skills, attitudes, and knowledge required to meet the occupational objectives of the students.
2. Written plans are developed and used that clearly state instructional objectives, activities, and resources to be utilized during instruction.
3. A variety of instructional methods are used (i.e., visual materials, field trips, speakers, etc.).
4. Students are provided with individualized projects or units of study relating to their career objectives.
5. Student leadership development activities are incorporated into the overall course of study.
6. English, math, science, and social science are integrated into the related class for continuing emphasis on developing essential competencies.
7. Students are being apprised of the importance of productivity, the free enterprise system, and basic employability skills as they pursue occupational preparation opportunities.

VII. STUDENT FOLLOW-UP AND PLACEMENT

Goal: Comprehensive evaluation of the Cooperative Education program is conducted which includes follow-up of students to determine successful placement, employers' opinions concerning program adequacy, and student opinion of program effectiveness.

Quality Indicators:

1. Employer opinion surveys are conducted annually concerning the relevancy of the Cooperative Education program.
2. The findings of evaluation, follow-up, and surveys are available and utilized by the teacher-coordinator, administration, and advisory committee in updating and improving the program.

VIII. COOPERATIVE EDUCATION COMPONENTS

Means a method of instruction of Vocational Education for persons who, through written cooperative arrangements between the school and employers, receive instruction, including required academic courses and related vocational instruction, by alternation of study in school with a job in any occupational field, but these two experiences must be planned and supervised by the school and employers so that each contributes to the student's education and to his or her employability. Work periods may be on alternative half days, full days, weeks, or other periods of time in fulfilling the cooperative program. (Defined in the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, Public Law 98-524, Section 521 (7).)

Goal: Cooperative Education involves responsibility and experience in application of skills relevant to the student's career objective.

Quality Indicators:

1. The parents, students, employer, and school have a signed written Training Agreement.
2. A training plan has been developed for each individual student and is relevant and specific to the student's occupational objectives. The student, employer, and teacher-coordinator use the plan to measure the progress and sequence of the learning experiences of the student.
3. Regularly scheduled coordination visits are maintained, and are of sufficient number so that the teacher-coordinator can assist with training or occupational program problems.
4. The teacher-coordinator maintains records of each student's agreement, training plan, employer rating sheets, wage and hour records, and information obtained from coordination visits.
5. The related classroom instruction is taught by the teacher-coordinator and is designed to fit the student's career objective and/or individual job needs.
6. An established district/institution policy exists for granting credit for occupational experience and related class instruction separately.
7. The employer and teacher-coordinator are cooperatively involved in evaluating student progress.
8. An evaluation instrument is used to measure student performance on the job at the training station.
9. There is an organized system for developing and approving training stations.
10. Each student is participating in an occupational training experience for a minimum average of ten hours per week.

11. Students are provided release time during the normal school day.
12. Students are employed for a monetary wage at a rate comparable to that paid other part-time employees for similar work and are not displacing other workers who could do such work.
13. Travel expenses are provided for coordination purposes and other program sponsored activities.
14. The appropriate state and federal labor laws are followed and reviewed by the teacher-coordinator.

**COOPERATIVE EDUCATION
SUMMARY SHEET**

This page is to be completed by the staff at the local level as part of the evaluation process.

AREA	STRENGTHS	RECOMMENDATIONS	PLANS FOR IMPROVEMENT
Program Development and Operation			
Advisory Council			
Facilities and Equipment			
Program Administration			

AREA	STRENGTHS	RECOMMENDATIONS	PLANS FOR IMPROVEMENT
Instructional Staff			
Curriculum and Instruction			
Instructional Materials and Supplies			
Student Follow-Up and Placement			